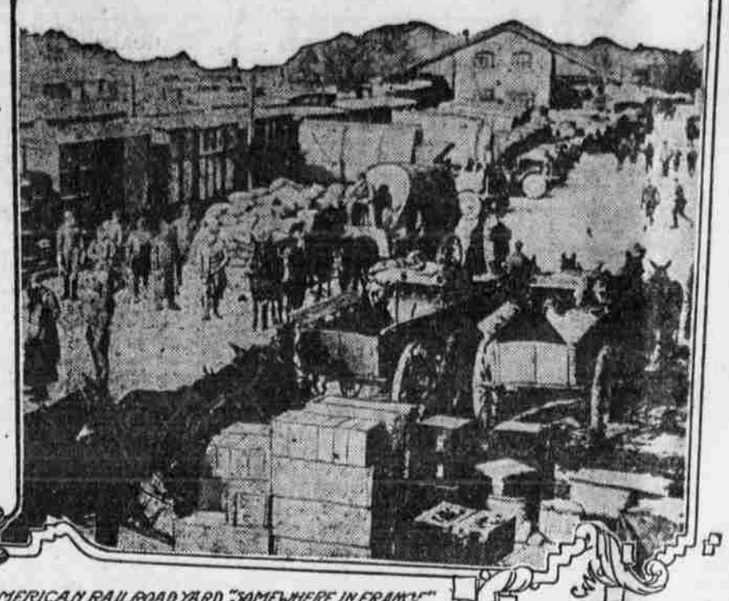
America's Achievement Behind the Lines

Greatest Scheme of Communications Ever Used in Warfare Is Rapidly Nearing Completion



AMERICAN RAILROAD YARD "SOMEWHERE IN FRANCE"

PHOTOS © BY COLOR PUB. HSE.

The London Times has published two articles described as "the first authorized description of what the American forces have accomplished in France during their first eleven months' participation in the war." The following are extracts from these articles:

THE Americans in France are rapidly pushing to completion the longest and in many respects the greatest scheme of communications ever used in warfare. A trip over these lines today is a deeply impressive experience. Since Mr. Newton D. Baker, the United States secretary of war, inspected them less than three months ago, the work is fairly leaping forward; the very landscape changes overnight.

After two solid weeks of travel, inspecting every main phase and much of the detail of this vast project, I return convinced that what the Americans have accomplished since their first detachment of troops landed in France 11 months ago will stand out in history as one of the greatest achievements of the war. The bearing of this vast work upon the whole war program is supremely important. There is no doubt in my mind that the extent of it, the meaning of it and the future possibilities of it should be made clear to the public, both here and in the United States.

It is well at the outset to state some basic facts. The French had all their sources of supply near at hand, and the establishment of their lines of communication was a comparatively simple affair. The British, with all their sources much farther away from the fighting areas and with water transport entering as an important factor into their scheme, had a much more difficult task in planning and perfecting their supply service.

But great as was the British problem, that which confronted the Americans when they entered the war was immeasurably greater. Their armies and all their war materials had to be brought thousands of miles from their sources of supply; the submarine campaign was at its highest point of efficiency; the adoption of the convoy system considerably reduced the capacity of shipping facilities, which, even in the most favorable circumstances, would have been totally inadequate to the demands made upon them; there were no large modern ports on the coast of France; nor was there anything like sufficient railway facilities to accommodate the vast stream of men and materials which must flow steadily in, with constantly increasing volume, from the date when the first detachment of United States soldiers landed on French soil.

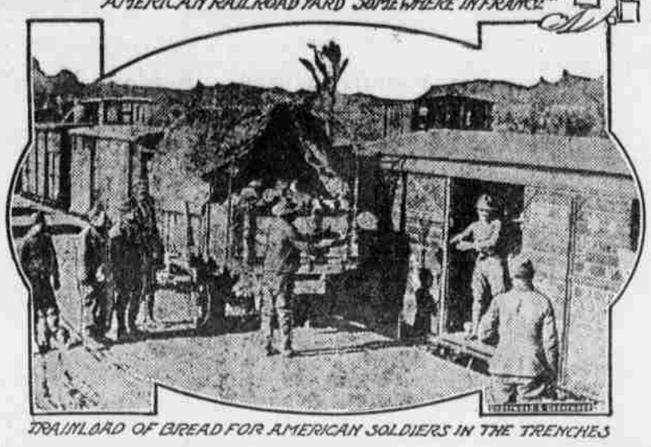
At the same time one must realize that, from the moment war was declared, America itself was rapidly resolving into a huge engine of war. With raw materials, industries, coal and railways, all put quickly under government control and each day becoming more centralized for the sole purpose of multiplying the output of war requirements, the pressure toward France increased with startling rapidity; indeed, it was measured only by the utmost limit of available shipping space. That situation has continued right up to the present, and will continue, no matter how great the output of new ships may be, for a considerable time to come.

To take care of this steadily growing volume of men, horses, guns, foods and supplies, to resolve the modest existing facilities into a permanent line of communications hundred of miles in length, adequate to care for an army of the future numbering millions, at the same time meeting all the transport requirements of the civic population scattered over the great stretch of France through which these lines extended—that was the task which confronted the first detachment of American engineers who landed here 11 months ago.

But with all their difficulties the Americans had one substantial advantage over the British, or even the French. They were able to profit by the three years' war experience of these two nations and shape the details of a considerable part of their main program in accordance with the full development of the British and French war machinery. They were not slow to avail themselves of this advantage, and the marvellous progress they have made is due in no small measure to the quickness with which they adapted and incorporated into their own scheme certain features of organization which the British and French had evolved through a long period of actual warfare. The cordial way in which the British and French transport and other officials received the Americans and gave them every possible kind of aid and advice is one of the many bright chapters in this story of achievement.

This was the only substantial advantage the Americans had. Their handicaps were multifold, their task colossal. How splendidly they attacked their problems and conquered one after another of the obstacles which confronted them stands out in clear perspective as one passes along their great lines of communication today. Sixty days more will see the greater part of the whole vast scheme in full operation. Even now the completed part of the system is equal to all demands made upon it, and with labor and materials available in fairly equable proportions, as they are now, the actual construction work is going ahead more rapidly than ever.

What the American forces in France have accomplished thus far is almost incredible. For instance, out of the waste lands adjacent to an old French port they have constructed a splendid line of modern docks, where every day now ships are pouring forth their cargoes of men and war materials, cars and machinery. This dock system is finished. It supplements the old French dock system in the town, where still more ships are constantly discharging American cargoes. A huge new warehouse system at this point is also nearing completion; even now it is able to take care of the great flood of supplies which is constantly pouring in.



TRAINLOAD OF BREAD FOR AMERICAN SOLDIERS IN THE TRENCHES

In the old part of this same coast town the Americans have installed motor operation and cold storage plants, a motor reception park, and quarters for storing supplies for ordnance and aviation forces. These are more or less temporary quarters, and will be merged in the near future in the general scheme which is now being completed in the outskirts of the town.

In addition to the new docks, warehouses and extensive railway yards (these latter have a trackage of nearly 200 miles), work is well advanced on the new car assembly shop, where already, when I saw it in its incompleted state, 20 odd freight cars a day, of three different designs, were being turned out and put into immediate service. Another assembly plant has been constructed—at a different point—to handle all-steel cars, which are transported here from America "knocked-down"—that is, in sections, in order to economize shipping space. At this plant these steel cars are now being assembled at the rate of a complete train a day, and plans are rapidly culminating for a large extension of the work. Here, too, a huge camp has been built for the negro stevedores, also a remount camp and two big rest camps, each providing for many thousands of American soldiers, who march thence from the boats to be sifted and rearranged for dispatch to the various training camps farther inland. Not far from here work on a new 20,000-bed hospital is forging ahead, and 30 days from now it will be virtually completed. This is the largest hospital center yet constructed. It is composed entirely of small, one-story, light, airy and attractive structures, divided into small squares, laid out on a great, open stretch of sand, surrounded by pine trees, and altogether promises to be an ideal institution of its kind.

In this same section is an immense new artillery camp all ready for the several brigades of artillery which were expected when I was there, and, like the hospital enterprise, it is in strong hands and promises well. In includes a large remount camp, in which were several thousand horses at the time of my visit. The work in this section, which is typical of that at all the other base ports I visited, is being vigorously and intelligently directed. Strong executives are in charge, and the spirit of the workers is excellent throughout. Everywhere the Americans are realizing that they have "caught up with themselves," and now that they can visualize the completion of what a few months ago looked so much like an impossible undertaking they are buoyed up, happy and inspired by their success; they have conquered obstacles and overcome conditions which only great ability and indomitable spirit could possibly surmount.

One realizes, after inspecting the character and extent of the work at the several base ports which the Americans have taken over, that here lies the strength of their future scheme of operations. These port schemes are great affairs today; but they are so worked out as to be capable of almost unlimited expansion. This is highly important, for the war developments of the past two months have clearly pointed the way toward greater unity of effort by the allies and greater mobility of action by the French, British and American fighting forces. The tendency is toward a pooling both of effort and supplies, the natural outcome of centralization under a single command. This may easily resolve the American base ports in France into main reserve centers, from which their channels of distribution will radiate directly to railheads on all parts of the front, instead of mainly through the intermediate and advance area centers, which are now being constructed. These latter, in that event, would be utilized in connection with the great and ever-growing training centers through which, for a long time to come, the American army of 2,000,000 or more, in the making, must pass.

As at the base ports, so I found conditions all along the hundreds of miles of the American lines of communication; everywhere the same kind of capable men in command, the same splendid spirit and energy, the same steady progress toward the ends in view, the same optimism as to the quick and successful working out of the plans as a whole.

At present the immense "intermediate section" looms large in the general American plan. It may or may not grow in importance as the war goes on, for, as I have already indicated, the further development of the great base ports may yet rob it of some of its originally contemplated functions; but, however that may be, it is now one of the main pillars of the structure. It comprises a wide variety of enterprises, all on a huge scale, scattered at various points over a large section of the country, but skilfully linked up by rail, one branch dovetailed into another, and all combining for the quick handling of stores for an army of millions.

An "organization chart," showing the activities centered under the commanding general of this great intermediate section, though not quite so formidable, perhaps, reminds one of a chart of the Whitehall district of London. This commanding officer is responsible primarily for the main reserve stores, for the American expeditionary forces and the constant sending forward of their daily supplies; but in addition to that he has a large measure of responsibility for the organization and control of great camps, schools, base hospitals, rest areas, engineering and repair shops, the principal repository for "spare parts" of all machinery used in the army, cold storage plants, oil and petrol depots, forestry work and control of a good-sized labor army, which includes many thousands of negroes, Chinamen and German prisoners of war.

A round of this huge field of operations is both instructive and inspiring. At one point I went through an enormous locomotive assembling and repair works (housed in a great modern factory building now nearing completion), built for the Americans, under French supervision, by a Spanish firm; a huge oil and petrol supply station, a 10,000-bed hospital and a number of other highly important branches of a central organization which constitutes one of the real backbone sections of the service of supply. At another point I went over great railway yards to see the rows upon rows of street structure warehouses which are being built to hold supplies for an army of a million men for 30 days; an immense refrigerating plant and countless other features, all on the same prodigious scale.

Calm, quiet men are supervising it all, watching it grow before their eyes. When the telephones jingle (and they are never long in repose) there is no shouting, no excitement; just quiet, firm replies to the questions put. There is everywhere an air of suppressed energy rather than exuberance or "bustle." It is orderly progress, firmly guided by strong minds, by capable men. America has put her best executives into this work and they are rapidly "making good," as events of the very near future are certain to prove.

Farther along the line I saw much the same evidence of orderliness combined with strength in the army bakeries, in the big central camouflage plant, at the various advanced centers from which the army supplies are rearranged for shifting to various railheads and thence to the soldiers at the front.

If, as many believe, it is going to be necessary for the Americans to put an army of 3,000,000 into the field to enable the allies to achieve a definite and conclusive military victory, then the quick development of the full American program is a matter of the highest importance to the whole allied cause. From every point of view the results of the first year's work may be set down as a glorious achievement, of which Americans have every right to be proud; the year's record is a monument to their zeal and their wonderful ability. It is a record which promises still greater things for the near future. It spells the beginning of the end, and points clearly to an overwhelming victory for the allies.

It seems to me that the more the people of France and England and the United States know about this American work in France the better. If the enemy, failing in his effort to deliver a knockout blow by flinging against the allied lines the full force of his eastern armies, released by the collapse of Russia, next turns his efforts to a concentrated peace offensive, as doubtless he will, then surely a clear knowledge of the nature and extent of the American achievement to date, of the American plans, and most of all an understanding of the underlying determination to go the whole distance and not stop till the right kind of peace has been secured, will steel the hearts of the war-weary ones and silence the traitors and pacifists among us for good and all

IMPROVED UNIFORM INTERNATIONAL

SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON

(By Rev. P. B. FITZWATER, D. D., Teacher of English Bible in the Moody Bible Institute of Chicago.)

LESSON FOR AUGUST 25.

CONFESSING CHRIST.

(May be used with missionary applications.)

LESSON TEXTS—Luke 12:8-12; Acts 1:1-11.

GOLDEN TEXT—Whosoever shall confess me before men, him shall the son of man also confess before the angels of God.—Luke 12:8.

DEVOTIONAL READING—James 2:1-13.

ADDITIONAL MATERIAL—Psalms 145:1-21; Mark 5:19-39; John 1:40-46; Acts 4:18-20; I Peter 3:15.

I. Importance of Confessing Christ (Luke 12:8-12).

To confess Christ is not easy; it has never been easy. To do so means exposure to ridicule, contempt and persecution. Regardless of its issue, the true disciple will confess his Lord.

1. Christ will confess before the angels of God those who confess him before men (v. 8). The true disciple will not be ashamed to let all men know that he knows, loves, and serves Christ.

2. Christ will deny before the angels of God those who deny him before men (v. 9). To deny Christ before men may get one a little of human applause, but will surely bring one to loss of heaven and to the sufferings of hell forever.

3. A pernicious testimony is unpardonable (v. 10). This testimony is the expression of a heart utterly perverse, attributing the mighty works of the Holy Spirit as wrought by Christ to the devil (Matt. 12-32; Mark 3:29). The unpardonable sin will only be committed by one whose heart is incurably bad, one whose moral nature is so vile that he fails to discern between God and the devil—a reprobate.

4. Divine aid given in testimony (vv. 11, 12). In the most trying hour the Holy Spirit will teach the disciples what to say, and how to say it.

II.—Qualifications for Confessing Christ (Acts 1:1-11).

Christ remained with the disciples forty days after his resurrection to prepare them for the important business of witnessing for him. He had a five-fold object:

1. To convince the disciples of the absolute certainty of his resurrection (vv. 2, 3). Before the disciples could undertake the great work for which they had been preparing, the question of Christ's resurrection must be settled beyond a doubt. No one can preach the gospel who does not have certainty of conviction touching the resurrection.

2. To instruct the disciples in things pertaining to the kingdom of God (vv. 3, 6, 7). Their unwillingness to hear Christ's instruction (John 16:12, 13) before his passion shut out much valuable information, so the Lord tarries to supply this need. They had a wrong idea as to the kingdom being restored, not as to fact, but as to time. Christ had again and again predicted a coming kingdom in harmony with the united testimony of the prophets of Israel. They understood him aright as to the fact of the kingdom, but the time of its manifestation they failed to grasp. The disciples should be defended against the reproach for having a materialistic conception. The kingdom is still to come; the time of its coming is known only to God.

3. To show the disciples that their business was to witness for Christ to the uttermost parts of the earth (vv. 4, 5, 8.) This witnessing was to be done in the power of the spirit, the result of which would be the formation of a new body, the church, called out from the world in the time of the postponement of the kingdom.

4. To show the disciples the scope of their missionary activity (v. 8). This is shown to be as wide as the world itself. They were to begin at home and carry the good news concerning Christ to the uttermost parts of the earth. Mission work begins at home and ends with the bounds of the earth.

5. To show the disciples that Christ will henceforth operate from heaven. They were to work on the earth, but the source of their power was in heaven. Though he is separated from the disciples it will not be forever, for he will come again. He will come again as the God-man, our mediator. The words of the men in white apparel have a double significance.

(1) To show that Jesus will come again.

(2) To show that in the meantime they should set to work in the discharge of their commission, and not be gazing up into heaven. The Lord's instruction to the disciples was, "Occupy till I come" (Luke 19:13). Those who have an intelligent hope touching the coming of Christ are not sky-gazers, but are deadly in earnest witnessing for Christ.

Divine Descent.

The incongruity of the Bible with the age of its birth; its freedom from earthly mixtures; its original, unborrowed, solitary greatness; the suddenness with which it broke forth amidst the general gloom; these to me are strong indications of its divine descent; I cannot reconcile them with a human origin.—Channing.

When It Is Hard to Pray.

It is hard for a man to pray according to God's will if he is not living according to it.

School Children Claim Attention

It is the children of school age, and the young folks going away to school that claim attention in August. Early in September they begin another year's work and must be outfitted with clothes for the first quarter of the school year, at least, and often for half of it.

The early display of clothing is a great help to those mothers who undertake to have their children's clothes made at home. It is probably quite as economical to buy little cotton dresses ready-made as to make them at home; but in home-made garments individual taste can be brought into play and more handwork and "stitchery" used than can be had in moderately priced frocks bought ready made.

Besides, remodeling is an item in wartime economy that every mother should consider. All woolen frocks that are either remodeled for the children or handed on to some one who can wear them save the consumption of energy, and this is a patriotic service that is worth while.

Blue serge—the never failing—is featured in the new displays. Sometimes it is combined with heavy linen as in a model showing a plaited, long-waisted blouse of amethyst-colored linen to which a plaited blue serge skirt is buttoned. A broad belt of patent leather slips through crocheted loops of amethyst silk floss that hang from the blouse. They are fastened to it with a few fancy stitches, an inch or so above the buttons so that the belt covers the joining of skirt and blouse.

Heavy linen in natural color makes collars and cuffs and sometimes vestees on serge one-piece frocks. Needle work in yarn or silk floss is more used for decoration than anything else. Usually one or two colors in contrast to the frock are used and the designs must be simple. The little frock pictured for the girl of six years is a good model for any sort of material—wool, linen, heavy cotton or plain wash silk. Wool and linen are most worth while, for the stitchery that must be put in by hand.

Collars and cuffs or vestees in heavy natural linen are beautiful in combination with blue, brown or green woolens. They are made so that they can be taken out and washed; hence two sets are necessary to each dress.

For Fall Motoring

To shade the eyes or not to shade the eyes, that is the question to be decided when the quest is for auto bonnets for fall motoring. There are several requisites that the successful bonnet or hat or cap must fill. First of all it must stay on; no matter what winds may blow or how much the driver manages to exceed the speed limit. To wobble about or come off is the unforgivable sin in a piece of motor headwear. Besides this indispensable feature—and equally important—the bonnet must measure up to its wearer's ideas of becomingness.

Comfort in all our apparel is an attribute that (it almost goes without saying) is required of it today. Nearly all the hats and bonnets for motoring have small brims, or visors at the front for shading the eyes, but there are some turbans and caps that are brimless. They are in the minority; so it is evident that if the question of shading the eyes or not were put to the popular vote—the eyes would have it. Nevertheless, the "Blue Devil" tam is so dear to the heart of young Americans that it enters the ranks of fall hats for motorwear. It sticks to the head as securely as a French soldier to a Sammy, and withstands shocks of wind and weather without betraying their punishment. It is for youthful wearers and shading the eyes is not a matter of concern with it. There are veils and goggles for that—if shading is needed. This tam, made of silk, appears at the left of the two pictures.

At the right there is a corduroy bonnet—clearly of Dutch bonnet inspiration. It has a becoming drooping brim all about the face, but a brief brimless space across the back. Here is a bit of strategy, which is successful in keeping the bonnet on the head. A short, strong elastic band is set into the base of the crown at this point and its tension makes the bonnet hug the head. The crown is flexible and the bonnet has a soft lining of silk. Everyone knows the enduring quality of corduroy and this model will surely commend itself to motorists. A small chiffon veil, gathered over an elastic cord with snap fasteners at the end, is easy to adjust on it—and easy to take off.

Julia Bottomley

Organdie for Bridesmaids.

Never were bridesmaids more charmingly frocked than in the exquisite organdie dresses introduced this season.